Views and Reviews in the World of Art

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By HENRY McBRIDE.

PON the eve of a sale of a great American art collection the following article in the Paris Temps of January 12, by M. Thiebault-Sisson, may not be without its interest. Apologies are made for the hasty translation:

"During the three and a balf years that we have been at war the business in art and art objects has not stopped for an instant except, perhaps, during the first year of the struggle. There was even a singular activity manifested in Germany during the summer of 1915, and I noted in the Temps at that time a number of sales both in the south and north of Germany, which had enormous successes and in which in particular the prices of French impressionistic work continued to mount in a most unexpected fashion.

"We too have participated in this movement though somewhat slowly. During the winter 1915-16 and in the spring of this last year the Hotel des Ventes, which was closed the preceding year, was the theatre of some modest transactions, but the season 1916-16, without being as brilliant as the three or four years preeeding the war, was active, and one saw the majority of collections, great and small, the dispersal of which had been halted by the war, pass through the Rue Drouot or the Galleries Georges Petit.

"The movement had taken on a greater amplitude this year. In spite of the fact that the American market has been closed to the importation of art objects since last spring the activities have been as consistent this year at the Hotel Drouot as in 1912, 1913 or 1914. For old furniture, tapestries and objets d'art a marked increase in prices has been noticed. It is only the works of very exceptional fame that have had some difficulty in remounting to the high figures of before the war.

"In the world of dealers transactions had been stopped up to 1916. Within eighteen months, however, business has rebounded with surprising elasticity. The propagandism commenced by the Government in the last months of 1915 and the spring of 1916 in Switzerland and Holland, followed by the effort in the Scandinavian countries in 1917, has given results infinitely beyond what had been expected. It is again impressionism which has had the honors of war in all these transactions; not only the classic impressionism of Manet, Monet, Renoir, Cezanne, Pissaro, Sisley, Jongkind, Guillaumin and Van Gogh but the post-impressionism with Gauguin, Bonnard, Vuillard, Maurice Denis and some others; not speaking of such avowed masters as Courbet or Puvis de Chavannes, or the isolated types such as Degas or Odilon

"It has been followed by a remarkable increase in the prices. We noticed last year the price of \$30,000 paid in the Low Countries for an admirable nude by Renoir, and the respectable sams given in Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden for pictures of the current independent French school. They bought in the Scandinavian countries works by Matisse, Mar-riches as to sustain the inquisition caused onet and Flandrin more even than in France, where the collectors nevertheless have not rested insensible to the attraetions of the young artists and have multiplied their purchases notably.

"Impressionism has not been the only held to profit by the pressing demand from the Scandinavians. While a single Danish collector has spent more than \$400,000 in 1917 for impressionistic works, the demand has been equal for our petits maitres. Will the demand contique? It is possible to doubt it. The isolated purchases of the newly rich of Norway, Sweden or Denmark lean almost all upon Degas, Monticelli, Gauguin and the classic impressionists. As to the French amateur it is more the art object than the picture in which he is indulging



Gainsborough's "Blue Boy." In the Hearn sale, American Art Associa-

himself, and the only thing the antique dealers complain of is the scarcity of the objects. They do not believe that the abstention of American buyers will last longer than the war. They believe it so little that some of them have not hesitated to establish in the States expensive and luxurious branch houses even in this troubled time. Such is the actual state of the art business in France. Let us see what has become of it in Germany.

"There it has taken truly fantastic proportions this year. In all categories of scuiptured or painted work in new or ancient silverware, in prints, pictures, furniture, moyen age or renaissance carvings, bronzes and also, it is perhaps unnecessary to add, diamonds, pearls and precious stones, a feverish speculation has been loosed. Among the amateurs some have hastened to sell to strangers, by preference Danish, Norwegian, Dutch or Swedish, in order to relieve their embarrassments. Others who have never been especially earried away by their love for art have opened their arms to objets de luxe, as much to affirm their new be able to transform them again into

"It seems, too, that the German exportations have much surmounted the local business. If one may judge by the repeated protestations of Dr. Bode, honorary director of the German museums, in the great dailies and art reviews, this phase of the business has reached an alarming size. More than a third of the great collections of Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne and other large cities has gone the way of the stranger. Dr. Bode's cry of alarm has awakened echoes in the Prussian Chamber, where the Deputy Kuffman has taken, figures in hand, the same theme and obtained two weeks ago a vote forbidding the sale to foreigners of ancient or modern masterpieces.

"In England art selling has been less animated than in France and much less so than in Germany. Nevertheless, some great sales, in which very high prices have been realized, have occurred at Christie's. These have thrown into eirculation pictures, Greek and Roman antiquities, drawings and old armor; among others the armor of the Connetable de Montmorency. The conclusion that one may draw from all these transactions is clear. The fine picture or the rare work follows a constant progression, which varies from 50 per cent. to 100 per cent.

more than in 1914. Will this progres-

The Hearn Sale-A Historic Art Event

Doubtless there will be many who will wish to attend the sale of the George A. Hearn collection who have never before assisted at these functions, and all these should be warned that a ticket of entrance should be obtained in advance from the American Art Association. The ballroom of the Hotel Plaza, where the pictures are sold, is commodious, but upon occasions of extra importance such as these there is never any room to spare, and it happens at times that many are turned from the doors.

The attention during the week at the palleries on Madison Square South has been large and the interest keen. As prophesied in advance a great deal of enthusiasm has been manifested for the American division of the collection, and the competition for the most admired canvases is sure to result in some imposing prices. This will have a beneficial effect upon the American market for pictures, and so the late Mr. Hearn in death as in life will be benefiting American artists.

I met Mr. Hearn but once and so have little to record of him biographically, but I was very much pleased at his simple and honest attitude toward his pictures. He was whimsical in his tastes and explored certain fields of art where I could not follow him, but it was delightful to find some one in this land, that is entirely too much ruled by fashion, who had tastes and the courage to indulge them. Now that the pictures have been carefully hung in harmonious galleries (I saw them in the great shop on Fourteenth street), it develops that Mr. Hearn not only had tastes, but taste. In every section of the collection there are many fine things, and in the American rooms the level is so high that it will be considered an honor later on by collectors to say, "This came from the Hearn collection." This, too, in spite of the amusing picture of the five dollar bill, which carries one straight back to another generation when pictures of five dollar bills were almost more plentiful than the Lills themselves.

I have already described the Blakelock landscape which I hope will not go to a museum in Toledo but to one nearer home

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